

May 28, 2022

Honorable Judge.

My name is Susan Blair Smith. I am the wife of Aghee William Smith (Bill). I am a caretaker for my disabled daughter, Julie. I also have a small quilting business. I have been married to Bill for nearly 31 years. We met at a Church dance.

After having lived with Bill for nearly 31 years, I believe I know him inside and out. I have seen him and his interactions with church, business, and personal associations. I have watched him as he has grown and worked and strived to be an honest, caring, loving, thoughtful, trustworthy and very trusting man. Over all of these years he has never, ever had the intent to hurt or harm anyone. In actuality, his intent has always been to help and care for others. He may have sometimes appeared a bit rough around the edges. But his true nature is one of kindness and sincere concern for others.

He has worked with many people to help them come out of the dregs of alcoholism through AA and teach them how they might find a way to recover from their addictions. He has spent hours and hours with people in conversation about God and how God has helped him in his own life. This has been a major focus in his life.

He has also gone to church nearly every Sunday for our entire marriage and even before that. He has served others through volunteer work at AA, church and with friends. I have watched him grow in strength and honor through all our years together.

I have seen him stop to help the homeless, the sad, the afflicted. He has allowed people without homes to come to our home to work, to shower, to wash their clothes, to rest, to watch a show, to eat and to take them where they needed to go. He's given rent money. He helped a man get some teeth at the dentist, he helped pay for peoples rent. He helped homeless find homes. He's bought numerous meals for those without means.

Because of these qualities in himself, he has always expected to be able to trust those he associated with, apparently to a fault. I know for a fact, that no matter what has been presented as "evidence" against him he is innocent of the assumptions and charges of those who opposed him.

I was certainly not involved with everything that was said and done with his clients. However, when we talked about different scenarios with his clients over the years, he always would talk about what was best for them and told me how he encouraged them to do what was right for them. Many times he would tell people not to invest because it wasn't the best choice at the time for them. Even if it meant he would not be compensated, he always would do what he believed was right for them.

*Because of Bill's trusting nature, he honestly believed in the companies he talked about with the clients were safe and valuable for investments. He did a lot of due diligence to learn about these companies. He would never intentionally mislead or harm anyone. **I know this to be true.***

Bill is a very hard worker. He would put in very full days and rarely take time off. He has spent his life studying and striving to better his knowledge in the businesses he has been involved with, general knowledge and spiritual knowledge. He seeks to improve his mind and has studied continuously.

Regarding his honesty, I remember after we were married, he told me about a situation where he had borrowed money to buy a car from a friend of his and had never had the money to pay him back it. As

soon as we could, he made sure that man was paid back. The man was very surprised to receive the payment because he had told Bill he didn't need to pay it back.

Another time we were struggling financially and had sought counsel from an attorney and didn't have the money to pay but Bill made sure he was paid a small amount each month until he was fully paid.

When his career was taken from him through the charges made against him, he immediately and continuously sought out new ways he could make a living to support our family. He did food delivery, furniture delivery. He worked through Covid to get his CDL license to become a truck driver, only to have his health take a terrible turn, once he started and nearly lost his life, all because of his dedication to earn a living for our family. He went to work while extremely ill and ended up being taken by ambulance to the hospital where he was kept for five days with sepsis, atrial fibrillation and a few other complications. He lost his drivers license because of passing out in the truck.

After all that, he pushed and worked to get the license back and started truck driving again and then tore the meniscus in his knee. Needless to say he is very dedicated to hard work and willing to do whatever possible to support our family.

Bill has expressed so many times his great sorrow and sadness as to what happened with the investments his clients made and how sorry for how much they were hurt by it. He has been sickened to find out what went on behind his back. He never had a clue that any funds were being mishandled. Because of his deep belief in God, I know the intent of his heart has always been to help, and to never ever harm anyone intentionally.

What has happened here is such a travesty. All of it! All the investors have suffered a lot. And it's awful. However, so has Bill suffered and so have I and so has our family. Bill trusted the wrong people just, as the investors trusted these companies. They have made Bill their scapegoat when the truth is there was no way he knew of their doings behind their closed doors. He is not the guilty party in this. He couldn't have done those things and ever lived with the guilt.

I beg for mercy for this good man. Please, dear Judge, look at who he is and not at the assumptions by those who do not know his heart. I pray for your sincere consideration here.

Very Sincerely,

Susan Blair Smith

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